

March 13, 2012

To: Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

Testimony in support of Raised Bill #352: AN ACT CREATING A PROCESS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE

Hi, my name is Bertha Pleasant. I live in Bridgeport, CT, where I have operated my Child Care Facility for 21 years. I am here today to advocate for family child care providers. As child care providers we are often not taken seriously or treated with the respect we deserve. We need to be viewed as child care professionals not babysitters!

Let's talk about the Care 4 Kids program and the problems we face as subsidy providers in CT. The rates are way out of proportion with the actual cost of child care in this state. Why are we expected to provide quality care at a much lower rate than the larger child care centers? We need better communications between C4K and providers. We need the application process shortened, 4 to 6 weeks is too long for a parent to wait for approval or denial, when a parent finally lands a job they need to go to work right away and providers can no longer afford to work 4 to 6 weeks without knowing if or when we will be paid. Many of us are in trouble with our mortgages and other creditors and we need to be paid at a reasonable rate and in a timely manner. We are not asking for much.

As family day care providers, we love the children in our care, this is the main reason we are in this kind of work. WE play a vital role in the nurturing and education of all the children in our care. As a result of that we have reached into our own pockets to cover necessary expenses, but our pockets are getting thinner and thinner. We Need Help! We need allies who see the value of raising the quality of family child care standards statewide. We need allies who see the value in the expertise we possess as family child care providers. Governor Malloy, State Legislators and other elected officials, will all of you be our allies? Will you all commit to helping the Family Child Care providers in passing the necessary legislation that will grant us full collective bargaining rights this year?!

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Bertha Pleasant
Bridgeport, CT